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EXAMINER

LEUNG, JENNIFER A

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Art Unit: 1797

Continuation of Item 11.

The request for reconsideration has been considered, but it does not place the application in condition for allowance for the same reasons set forth in the final Office Action.

Applicant (at page 4, last paragraph, to page 5, first paragraph) argues that the combination of Suzuki and Swift fails to disclose or suggest the limitation of a heat conductive medium “supporting” the microreactor within the pressure vessel.

The Examiner respectfully disagrees and maintains that the heat conductive medium in Suzuki is capable of “supporting” the microreactor. In particular, the medium is capable of supporting the walls of the microreactor. If in use, the microreactor is pressurized to a high pressure without the presence of the heat conductive medium to counteract or withstand the elevated internal pressure of the microreactor, the walls would distort due to the strain from the pressure within the microreactor. The walls of the microreactor may even rupture if an upper limit of pressure is surpassed. The heat conductive medium in Suzuki supports the walls of the microreactor against any distortion or rupture caused by a high pressure within the microreactor.

It is further noted that Applicant’s specification (at paragraph [0025]) describes a microreactor “supported within the inner volume of a pressure vessel **12** by a heat conductive medium **22**.” The preferred heat conductive medium is SiC. Applicant, however, then goes on to state that other forms of heat conductive medium may be used, including “other solids, oils, other liquids, gases and any other medium.”

Similarly, Suzuki discloses a heat conductive medium comprising a gas or a fluid pressure medium **E**, such as air, water or oil. (see paragraph [0015]).

Thus, the heat conductive medium in Suzuki would be capable of “supporting” the reactor within the inner volume of the pressure vessel in the same manner that Applicant’s heat conductive medium, e.g., of oils, other liquids, gases, etc., supports the microreactor within the pressure vessel.

The language of the claims has been interpreted by giving the terms thereof the broadest reasonable interpretation in their ordinary usage in context as they would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art in light of the written description in the Specification, unless another meaning is intended by Applicant as established therein, and without reading into the claim any disclosed limitation or particular embodiment.

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Lastly, the request does not place the application in condition for allowance at least for the reason that claims 1, 2, 4 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ota et al. (JP 2002-186844) in view of Swift et al. (US 4,670,404). (See item 5 in the final Office Action). It is noted that this rejection has not been addressed by Applicant.

* * *

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JENNIFER A. LEUNG whose telephone number is (571) 272-1449. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:30 am - 5:30 pm Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Walter D. Griffin can be reached on (571) 272-1447. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Jennifer A. Leung/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1797